

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 491

To amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to prohibit the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from acquiring land to establish a refuge of the National Wildlife Refuge System unless at least 50 percent of the owners of the land in the proposed refuge favor the acquisition.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 20, 1997

Mr. FORD introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to prohibit the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from acquiring land to establish a refuge of the National Wildlife Refuge System unless at least 50 percent of the owners of the land in the proposed refuge favor the acquisition.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. LANDOWNER REFERENDA ON REFUGES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4 of the National Wildlife
5 Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C.
6 668dd) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1 “(j) LANDOWNER REFERENDA ON REFUGES.—

2 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Before acquiring land to
3 establish a refuge of the System or preparing a final
4 environmental assessment or environmental impact
5 statement on the proposed acquisition under the Na-
6 tional Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.
7 4321 et seq.), the Secretary shall—

8 “(A) hold a public hearing on the proposed
9 acquisition in the area in which the land pro-
10 posed to be acquired is located; and

11 “(B) acting through a private, independent
12 entity, conduct a referendum among owners of
13 the land that will be acquired to establish the
14 refuge to determine whether the owners favor
15 the proposed acquisition.

16 “(2) APPROVAL OF ACQUISITION.—The Sec-
17 retary may acquire land to establish a refuge of the
18 System only if a majority of owners of the land vot-
19 ing in the referendum favor the proposed acquisi-
20 tion.”.

21 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by
22 subsection (a) takes effect on October 1, 1996.

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